



## DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

### INFORMATION SERVICE

#### FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

For Immediate Release  
TO PMs OF FEBRUARY 15, 1944 W.

The pilchard, or California sardine, season ends today in the Northern and Central districts of California. Catches in these two districts, centered at San Francisco Bay and Monterey, were substantially higher than a year ago, according to preliminary figures.

Fishing for pilchard will continue in the Southern district, centered at San Pedro, until February 29. So far the Southern district has fallen behind last year's production totals.

As of January 29, the catch from all three districts for the season totaled 454,543 tons, according to the Office of the Coordinator of Fisheries. This compares with 458,903 tons for the same period in the previous season.

The catch at San Francisco through January 29 was 125,721 tons as against 115,100 for the previous season; at Monterey, 204,528 as against 157,520; and at San Pedro, 124,294 compared with 186,283.

An innovation near the end of the season in the San Francisco area was the use of Navy blimps to spot schools of fish. Under a plan worked out by O. E. Sette, OCF area coordinator, with the Navy and Coast Guard, experienced sardine fishermen, now members of the Coast Guard, have instructed crew members of blimps in how to recognize schools of pilchards from the air. The blimps do not make special surveys looking for fish, but crewmen keep a lookout on regular patrol duties. When a school is sighted the size and direction of the school is noted and radioed to port.

In one of the first trials of spotting from blimps, a large school was sighted on January 15. Purse seiners hurried to the scene and that night took more than a thousand tons of fish. In less than a week over 6,000 tons had been caught.